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ABSTRACT

Migrant is a relative status which historically has been quite diverse, not only in origin and makeup, but in style. The trends in migrant workers' status and method of operation by broad historical epochs are described. Wherever the migrant is, he has wandered there through a series of circumstances, identities, and relationships which have seriously altered the very nature of this population. Emphasis is placed on what has happened since the Civil War (when an economic style opened the door for more extensive mobility among farm laborers) and the impact of "modern history" (especially industrialization). The document covers: (1) farm laborers in Colonial America, (2) migrant workers in the West and Southwest (beginning in the 1800's), and (3) the migrant worker since World War II. Hope for migrant workers, a minority group with little power, may lie in unionization, although the unwillingness of the government to enforce labor laws is only one part of the problem in making these efforts effective. Some other difficulties are: (1) low educational levels, (2) the inability of workers to settle for "deferred gratification", (3) the lack of effective leadership, and (4) the incongruent life style inherent in the concept of the "organized transient". In summary, the migrant situation is anything but clear and predictions are hazardous. Whether those remaining in the migrant stream can ever move out of this status depends on a number of variables, i.e., if the economy can absorb them and if they are not completely eliminated from agricultural pursuits by industrialization. (KM)

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THE MIGRANT WORKER IN SOCIO-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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THE MIGRANT WORKER IN SOCIO-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Migrant worker? Itinerant Harvester? Day Laborer? Seasonal Agricultural worker? A variety of names have been used to describe those individuals who sell themselves to available employers for the relatively short periods of time their services may be needed in rural settings. Since they must be available where work opportunities exist, they must be able to move frequently and easily--forcing an itinerant life style. They may travel in the company of others--others like themselves with respect to color, ethnicity, origin, etc., or others who share their low socio-economic status (i.e., their poverty) and are forced to seek menial work where available--or they may travel alone or in families. They may be "bussed," transported by trucks or moved by other mass means, or they may own a vehicle and be able to move more "freely". In other words, our subject is not a homogeneous mass--bland, anonymous individuals whose only identity is their category--migrant worker. This has never been the case and, hopefully, will be even less so in the future. Evidence from "identity movements" (e.g., La Raza) suggests a new migrant emerging--less subject to the power of outside economic forces and/or international events.

Where have these people come from? Where are they going? Why can't they "settle down" and improve their life situation? These questions once again pre-suppose a homogeneous mass, reproducing itself, increasing its numbers, but unable to improve its status. Migrant is a relative status which historically has been quite diverse, not only in origin and make-up, but in style. And the evolutionary process is far from over. A different breed has been emerging in recent years--a breed incongruous with both the "ideal" (i.e., the image) and the reality of the itinerant agricultural worker of the past. Who would have predicted a generation ago that it would be possible to "organize" migrant workers into any significant power group. Most migrant workers of the past were too dominated by a subsistence level of living to even conceive of "unionization" as a means of contending with the often intolerable working conditions under which they slaved. What has brought this rather amorphous group to this point?

The purpose of this paper is to describe the trends in the migrant workers' status and method of operation in terms of broad historical epochs. Americans in general often have a poor sense of history, but behavioral scientists also are guilty of studying contemporary behavior patterns with little knowledge of (or interest in) the series of historical circumstances that have led to the particular event or situation now painfully real. Wherever the migrant is, he has wandered there through a series of circumstances, identities, and relationships which have seriously altered the very nature of this population. It is our contention

that this process, or series of events, can be identified by delineating particular historical periods and documenting the shifts in activities, origins, and directions which have characterized these periods and subsequent developments. Emphasis will be placed on what has happened since the Civil War (when an economic style opened the foor for more extensive mobility among farm laborers) and the impact of "modern history" (especially industrialization). While the primary goal of this investigation is to obtain a greater understanding of the current trends in predominantly rural migrant manpower, the interpretation will be the result of an analysis of historical antecedents of the contemporary scene.

Farm Laborers in Colonial America

When European settlers invaded the "new world", the indigenous population (i.e., the Indians) responded in various ways. Along the Eastern seaboard, the English encountered hospitale Indians who shared with them their knowledge of the land (and the land itself). Further south, particularly in the region of the Carolina's, the Indian tribes were more suspicious of the invaders and proved to be uncooperative in helping them settle. (Handlin, 1968, pp. 16-18) But regardless of the initial reaction, the Europeans soon established their dominance, over time driving the Indians further from their native lands until they were eventually "contained" in restricted areas. Therefore, the "migrant group" became the dominant culture of the new world and the indigenous population assumed a subordinate status. Stanley Lieberson offers an explanation for the emergence of migrant superordination.

> When the population migrating to a new contact situation is superior in technology (particularly weapons) and more tightly organized than the indigenous group, the necessary conditions for maintaining the migrants' political and economic institutions are usually imposed on the indigenous population. Warfare, under such circumstances, often occurs early in the contacts between the two groups as the migrants begin to interfere with the natives' established order. There is frequently conflict even if the initial contact was friendly. (Lieberson, 1971, p. 122)

The tribalism, superstition, and lower level of economic development of the Indians resulted in their exploitation by the Europeans. However, they proved to be unpromising as farm laborers for the English opportunists, who were forced to look elsewhere for the manpower needed in their agricultural pursuits. Only much later (and even then rarely) did the Indians participate in migrant farm labor. The first true migrant workers came from Europe to the colonies as "indentured servants."

The fertile soils and warm climates of the Southern colonies were conducive to long growing seasons for highly desired products (e.g., tobacco, cotton, etc.). However, available labor was a scarce commodity. As previously mentioned, because the Indians did not adapt to this status, the new landlords were forced to look

to their native land for this necessary manpower, offering a variety of inducements (including coercion) to obtain the necessary services.

Many of those who responded to these inducements were not unfamiliar with the life style expected of them. European society was acutely stratified during this period of history (1600-1754). Many Englishmen of the lower socio-economic strata of society provided for their subsistence through contracted labor; in return, their masters guaranteed them a minimum of the necessities of life (i.e., food, clothing, shelter) as protection from absolute deprivation. Usually upon termination of the contract, the laborer had little choice except to renew his original agreement in apprehension of the status of "apprentice" which ".. provided that anyone without a master could be sold at public auction." (Handlin, 1968, p. 18) People in such a position were attracted to the possibility of an "unrenewable contract system" in the new world, as well as the other freedoms promised in Colonial American. The final hurdle for these migrants--i.e., transportation across the ocean--was solved through the system of "indentured servitude." Contracts were signed in England under which an individual agreed to labor for a specified period of time, ranging from as few as three to as many as seven years, in return for the cost of passage. Thus, the solution to America's manpower needs was to be satisfied for a period of time through English migrants. Often a planter or merchant intending to migrate to America would organize a group of laborers for passage. More frequently, however, transactions occurred when a ship'e captain resold his indentured servants' contracts to eager landlords in the Colonies at a handsome profit.

Another source of manpower for the colonists was those individuals residing in European jails--Europe's "undesirables"--which included law-breakers of every type. Since they were viewed as a burden to society, transporting them to the new world as farm laborers solved problems for both societies. Landowners in Georgia and the Carolina's received a larger proportion of these individuals than any other settlements in America.

But the European "indentured servant" system could provide only a part of the continually increasing need for manpower to work the abundance of land in the colonies. Attention was gradually turned to another source of manpower--Africa. The first blacks were introduced to America in 1619 by a Dutch captain at Jamestown, Virginia. The number of blacks increased slowly, but constituted a significant segment of the farm labor population in the Carolina's, Virginia and Maryland by the end of the Seventeenth Century. In 1750, Georgia repealed a ban on slavery that had been designed to prevent labor competition between the blacks and the English debtors who were making a new start in that Southern colony. Merchants in Boston and other New England ports grew rich on the slave trade, and Southern planters flourished. (Ladenburg and McFeely, 1970, p. 1-2)

Although blacks were initially brought in as indentured servants, it soon became clear that their situation was considerably different from their European counterparts. Physically and visibly, they were obviously different; they were black instead of white. Culturally they were different because their point of origin was not the same as that of their masters. The colonists, now the indigenous population--i.e., the "population sufficiently established in an area so as to possess the institutions and demographic capacity for maintaining some minimal form of social order through generations" (Lieberson, 1971, p. 121)--were clearly superordinate in this relationship. The blacks were perceived as inferior to both the landowners (their masters) and the indentured servants (other laboring groups) from Europe. Therefore, another significant difference between the African and European "indentured servants" became most evident--a political difference. Bonded indentured servants were not bound for life, nor were their children necessarily born into servitude. In contrast, blacks found that seldom was it possible for them to "earn" their freedom. By the 1680's, a clear line had been drawn between the whites who came to America as indentured servants and the blacks who assumed the position of slave for life. All the while, this trade for human merchandise was being stepped up by the English Royal African Company, which acquired potential slaves from African chiefs through the chiefs' victories in inter-tribal warfare. (Handlin, 1968, p. 64)

Slavery was justified on the basis of the perceived inferiority of the blacks, most of which was the product of a system which denied opportunities for self-development and improvement to the blacks. Opportunities for any vertical mobility were virtually non-existent. But for many years, an active slave trade and the encouraged levels of reproduction of black workers resulted in an ever-increasing number of slaves. By 1860, nearly four million Negroes were subjects of a social system in which they were literally chattel (property) of another man. (Ladenburg and McFeely, 1970, p. 2) During the latter part of the Eighteenth Century and the first half of the Nineteenth Century, they constituted the bulk of the farm labor force, particularly in the Southern states. They were a migrant work force, not in that they were able to "follow the harvests," but in that they were moved at random through the sale of workers between landowners. This situation would begin to change after 1865, but it would be many years before their lot in life would be significantly improved.

Migrant Workers in the West and Southwest

For obvious geographical reasons, migrant workers in the West and Southwest did not come from Europe or Africa. Also, they came after the settlement of the West by the Spanish, and later the Russians, in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries.

The first migrant workers in the West were the Chinese. Beginning with one Chinese in 1820, there were only 758 recorded in America in 1850. However, the discovery of gold in California

changed the picture completely. About 20,000 were admitted in 1852 and 13,000 in 1854. While they were never overtly welcomed, they were accommodated. With the end of the Gold Rush and the Civil War, the construction of the transcontinental railroad created further demand for cheap labor. From the Central Pacific Coast, pushing eastward, nine out of ten laborers were Chinese. (Berry, 1965, p. 208) The final joining of the transcontinental railroad, when a golden spike was driven to hold the last rail at Promontory, Utah on May 10, 1969, marked a historic moment for America, but a catastrophic one for the Chinese. "Some 10,000 Chinese were thrown out of work into an already depressed labor market." (Peterson, 1971, p. 30) Many Chinese returned to labor in the agricultural fields of California, but feelings against them were quite hostile.

> Anti-Chinese clubs already existed in every ward of San Francisco, and a new Workingmen's party thrived briefly on the basis of its single issue: "The Chinese must go!" In two cases that reached the Supreme Court, the only justice who argued for exclusion was from California, and he eventually convinced his colleagues of his position. A revised treaty with China gave the United States the new right to "regulate, limit, or suspend," but not "absolutely to prohibit," the immigration of laborers. In line with this stipulation, the Exclusion Act of 1882 suspended the immigration of Chinese laborers for ten years. The pressure that had been exerted to get the original bill through Congress was reapplied before the expiration date, so that the suspension was renewed in 1892 and in 1902 was made permanent. (Peterson, 1971, p. 31)

Eventually they were replaced in the fields by another migrant group from the South--the Mexicans--which forced the Chinese into other business ventures. From common laborers and domestics, they moved into various business activities, some of which proved to be relatively successful. They were also forced into urban settings and ethnic communities. But in it all, they gradually experienced some stability, and some vertical mobility, which pretty well removed them from the migrant labor force.

Because of the Chinese situation, the half-century during which the Japanese were entering the United States was characterized by strong anti-orental agitation. In 1868, 148 contract laborers went to Hawaii, but the experience was unpleasant and most returned to their home-land; no others were to follow for seventeen (17) years. Japan did not intend "that its country should be regarded as another China, one more storehouse of coolie labor to be maltreated by foreign overseers." (Peterson, 1971, p. 10) With improved relations with Hawaii, and an economic crisis in Japan, the Japanese migration began again in 1886. In an

eight year period, nearly 29,000 immigrated to Hawaii from impoverished areas of Japan to become agricultural laborers. Two major shifts were soon apparent in the Japanese immigration after this period: (1) the immigrants were less impoverished; and (2) they did not stop in Hawaii, but continued to the mainland of the United States. Until the First World War, there were approximately 215,000 Japanese immigrants to the U.S. mainland (plus countless illegal immigrants), the largest number coming between 1900-1908. In 1908, the U.S. made a Gentleman's Agreement with Japan, which effectively excluded large numbers of Japanese immigrants in later years. (Peterson, 1971, pp. 11-15) In 1909, approximately 40% of the Japanese were working as farm laborers in seven or eight Western states (mainly California) in positions originally slotted for Negroes and Chinese. Even then, the larger percentage of Japanese outside the farm labor force gave indication that the nature of the "welcome" extended to the Japanese, and their response to it, varied. The anti-oriental feeling originally extended toward the Chinese included the Japanese in the early 1900's, and they responded by concentrating geographically even though they were still diffused with repsect to their participation in the labor force. The Japanese have been a relatively small part of the migrant farm labor force since before the First World War, and they were removed even more with their incarceration during World War II and their relocation after the War.

The Mexican began to appear in American fields in significant numbers after 1920, and they have come to dominate the agricultural employment spectrum in the West and Southwest since that time. Since 1900, a total of 1.4 million people from Mexico have been legally admitted to the United States, and untold numbers have come in illegally. (Levitan, Mangum, and Marshall, 1972, p. 451) One of the determining factors explaining the increased immigration from Mexico was the push from rural Mexico during the 1920's due to the Mexican Revolution. The political and economic situations in Mexico continued to influence further spurts of immigration, especially from 1955-1964. Also, the pull provided by the need for farm laborers in the U.S. had a signigicant impact on this group's move into the Southwest. (Levitan, Manum, and Marshall, 1972, p. 454)

During the Second World War, those industries serving wartime needs drained the surplus labor supply left by the draft board. Food supplies were in demand and a cheap source of labor was needed. "The government was induced to sanction the wetback. And in 1944 the United States spent nearly $24 million to supply the growers with 62,170 braceros." (Moore, 1965, p. 83) Even after the war ended, border patrols "looked the other way" during the harvest seasons and the Mexicans streamed across the border to work in the fields. The federal government not only condoned, but actually encouraged, illegal traffic of wetbacks. In 1952, the McCarran-Walter Act was passed which permitted the temporary importation of foreign labor under contracts for periods of

up to three years.

> In 1951, 192,000 legal braceros came in under contract to work in the fields of the Southwest. Illegal wetback traffic began to decline. But by the end of the decade the number of braceros had risen far above the wartime emergency levels of either World War II or the Korean War. In 1959 there were 437,000 Mexican nationals scattered across the United States from Texas to Michigan. (Moore, 1965, pp. 84-85)

One other part of the migrant labor force in the West must be mentioned. During the Depression years, the dire economic conditions in the U.S. held little appeal for the Mexican worker. During this period, a group of migrants emerged out of the mainstream of American society--those individuals (primarily from the "Dust Bowl" of Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma) who lost their farms and homes as a result of several years of dry weather and the prevailing economic conditions. Tenant families--the "Gasoline Gypsies"--went to California looking for the work they knew best (i.e., farming) in desperate hope that they one day would be able to save enough money to return home and start again. (These individuals have been graphically depicted in literature in Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath.)

> By 1934 the Anglo population in the labor camps reached 50 percent. As the bitter years of dust storms and Depression set in, Okies and Arkies continued to stream into California in caravans of jalopies.
>
> It was ironic that after so many years of coolies and peons, American workers took over in a time of widespread unemployment. Hence, wages and working conditions, bad as they were, got worse. For every job that was open, there was a hungry carload of migrants. Men fought in the field over a row of beans. (Moore, 1965, p. 83)

There were 221,000 such individuals reported in California in 1938 and for the first time there was a surplus in the farm labor force. However, many of these individuals were channeled into wartime industries and ceased to be a significant part of the migrant labor force during the war years. Thus, the need for the Mexican worker once again produced an increase in Mexican immigration.

The Migrant Worker Since the War

Blacks have been drastically affected by the Wars. During both World Wars, large numbers of blacks immigrated northward to better-paying wartime factory jobs. These movements were significant in that they were mass movements not only to new

occupational opportunities, but from a rural to urban life style. This shift was not always an improvement, but many blacks were now no longer dependent upon the land for their sole means of support. Also, this created a shortage of farm labor for the South, a need which was filled by transporting Chicanos out of the Southwest to new territory--still, however, on a temporary basis. (Quarles, 1971, p. 180)

The "New Deal" under Franklin D. Roosevelt launched a new economic plan for the nation in an effort to provide some relief from the Depression. However, in order to qualify for benefits, certain restrictions had to be met such as a residence requirement which necessitated residence in a particular state for a specified period of time. Obviously, migrants seldom met such requirements and little relief was forthcoming. Subsequent legislation has also failed to alleviate the problems for the majority of the migrant workers. More recent legislation (e.g., the Manpower Development and Training Act, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, New Careers, etc.) has not reached many of the current migrants for several reasons. Many of these programs are oriented toward urban centers (especially the ghettos of our larger metropolitan areas) and the rural transient is not affected. Rural Chicanos, the largest portion of the current migrant work force, have little political influence, and are even alienated from the more successful Mexican-Americans in urban areas who have received the greater share of federal program funding. Also, many of the Mexican workers are alien and may not qualify for federal assistance.

The Mexican worker, by any standard, continues to "exist" in dire socio-economic conditions. In 1960, 32.8% of the Southwest's Chicanos (or 1,082,000 people) were "officially" classified as poor. The median level of years of school completed by persons fourteen years and over was 8.1 for Chicanos, as compared to 12 years for Anglos and 9.7 years for other non-whites in the Southwest in 1960. Other characteristics of the Chicanos' condition which were self-perpetuating were large families, inadequate education, cultural isolation from the dominant Anglo groups, language barriers, discrimination, poor health conditions, and political powerlessness. (Levitan, Mangum, and Marshall, 1972, p. 451) Mexican farm workers are generally excluded from workmen's compensation, unemployment benefits, minimum wages and the right to collective bargaining. These conditions leave the migrant worker almost totally dependent upon their employers subjectivity for wages. The lack of adequate legislation to protect the migrant worker helps to perpetuate this situation.

Further insight into the migrant subculture has been provided by Robert Coles, a psychiatrist, and summarized by Simpson and Yinger.

> They are on the move much of the time, usually they do not vote, and they are rarely eligible for local unemployment assistance. Their right to adequate schooling for their children, to police protection, and to sanitary and fire inspection and regulation of their homes are, in many cases, limited. They are isolated from the life of the various communities where they work. The dies of most migrants is poor in vitamins and proteins, and they receive inadequate medical care. Coles found that children lean to respond to two worlds, that of their migrant family and that of "others" (the comfortable, middle class world of America). Migrant children move early and unceremoniously into adulthood when two elements are fulfilled, experience in working in the fields and the onset of puberty. Many of the younger migrants attempt to leave the migrant stream, and some succeed by finding jobs in the cities or at least by buying a car so that they can travel along rather than in trucks and buses. Lack of education, unemployment, fear of the city, however, work against them. (Simpson and Yinger, 1972, p. 319)

Although the growers and others who work with migrants often regard them as lazy, unreliable, quarrelsome, etc., Coles' observations do not support such claims. He has concluded that those he has studied "are motivated toward work, want to work, and will work." (Simpson and Yinger, 1972, p. 320)

The migrant worker today is exiled in the land in which he lives. Hundreds of thousands of people--including native whites, blacks, and Chicanos--move each year between states harvesting fruits and vegetables. They follow primarily three main streams across the U.S.

> (1) along the Pacific Coast from southern California to Washington and back; (2) from the south-central region of Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma northward through a wide area, terminating in Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin; and (3) along the Atlantic seaboard, starting in Florida and moving up through Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York, with a few going on to New England, and a return to Florida. (Simpson and Yinger, 1972, p. 319)

But the more important question is where they are going with respect to job opportunities, job stability, and decent living arrangements? Is the picture of this exploited status only different in kind and, perhaps, ethnic identity? Or is this group beginning to accumulate some of the political "clout" necessary to alter their status in a significant manner?

The migrants are obviously in a minority status and face the problems of all minorities who find it difficult to acquire

and exercise power when there has been none. To the extent that civil rights legislation of the past decade is at least confronting these problems, the climate is conducive to change, but migrant workers are anonymous, faceless masses who often emerge into public view only when another dilapidated bus or truck "misses the bridge". Also, as mentioned earlier and documented throughout this paper, migrants are not a homogeneous mass. It is virtually impossible to mobilize an uneducated, diverse collection of people into a cohesive power bloc. If there is a language barrier, the problem is aggravated even further.

One ray of hope is the effort to unionize farm laborers which may give them a better bargaining position for fair wages and more suitable housing. The efforts of people like Cesar Chavez in California and Tijerina in New Mexico have resulted in some organization of the workers and, more importantly, some visibility for the problems of the workers. The grape pickers' boycott indicated the workers could be mobilized to some extent, they could achieve a broader base of public support, and their actions could have some impact on the economy. It also may change the scene with respect to governmental protection of migrant workers. The growers have had virtually unlimited power for many years influencing governmental control of minimum wage standards, employee benefits, etc. Also, farm workers have been excluded from coverage by the National Labor Relations Act, which protects the worker in his efforts to unionize to improve his situation.

But the unwillingness of the government to enforce labor laws to benefit the migrant is only one part of the problem in the efforts to unionize migrant workers. Other difficulties would include the following, which obviously are cumulative in their effect.

(1.) The low educational level of the migrant worker--It may be difficult for these people to understand the union movement and perceive it as the "best" course of action.

(2.) The inability of the workers to settle for "deferred gratification"--People who are hungry are often not willing (or able) to be rational in their economic pursuits. Boycotts and strikes do not solve their immediate problems.

(3.) The lack of effective leadership--There have been so few people emerge within these groups who could mobilize them to effectively change their position. Although effective leadership in the black community has been apparent in recent years, Chicano leaders are still rare and often ineffective.

(4.) The incongruent life style--There is an inconsistency in the concept of the "organized transient". Any attempt to organize workers necessitates some degree of stability and that is the primary ingredient often lacking in the subculture of the migrant worker. In addition, it is ironic that a group which knows no stability because of changes in residence with the harvests should probably fear change as much as they do. Eric Hoffer depicts this fear in his own experiences as a migrant worker:

> Back in 1936 I spent a good part of the year picking peas. I started out early in January in the Imperial Valley and drifted northward, picking peas as they ripened, until I picked the last peas of the season, in June, around Tracy. Then I shifted all the way to Lake County, where for the first time I was going to pick string beans. And I still remember how hesitant I was that first morning as I was about to address myself to the string bean vines. Would I be able to pick string beans? Even the change from peas to string beans had in it elements of fear. (Hoffer, 1952, p. 1)

He goes on to say that when the change is drastic, the uneasiness is even deeper and more lasting. The unionization of farm workers is a drastic alteration of life style and their reluctance to take this step is understandable.

But unionization is inevitable if the farm worker is to survive. Cesar Chavez has been noted for saying no machines could be developed with the capability of picking soft fruits; only migrant workers could do that. (Pitrone, 1971, p. 55) In other words, the migrant farm workers' bargaining power was their willingness to do a job that needed to be done. Mechanization has been substituted in many areas where manual labor was once dominant, but the soft fruits and vegetables remained their source of livelihood. But even this is changing! Research teams at land grant colleges doing research for major corporations involved in agricultural production have found ways to build a tomato hard enough to withstand the grip of mechanical "fingers". Research has also been conducted on the genetic structure of strawberries, asparagus, and other foods to prepare them for the grasp of mechanical harvesters. But little concomitant research is seeking to deal with the human factor--the needs of rural farm workers and the impact of their displacement. The scientists at land grant colleges have served well the needs of corporate interests, but failed to fulfill their intended purpose of bringing the fruits of their research to all rural people. (Hightower, 1972, p. 10)

In summary, the migrant scene is anything but clear and predictions are hazardous. There are some positive signs--the identity movements (e.g., La Raza), the limited success of labor leaders and the boycotts of lettuce and grapes, the emergence of in-group leadership, the increased visibility of this group and their plight, and the increased base of support from outside the migrant community (including some legislative support).

But the picture is anything but bright. From this historical perspective, one might conclude from the population shifts that most groups can eventually move out of this status. Many of the indentured servants from Europe were allowed to work out of this position, but the slaves never were. It took a national struggle to change this situation and many blacks are still caught in the current transient laborers. The orientals were virtually forced

out by strong exclusion policies. Many of the "Gasoline Gypsies" found opportunities to escape into wartime industries. However, a segment of "po' whites" still follow the harvests along with the blacks and the all too numerous Chicanos. Whether those remaining will ever see this situation altered depends on a number of overwhelming "if's"--if the economy can absorb them; if they can effectively mobilize for collective bargaining; if they are not completely eliminated from agricultural pursuits by machines designed to plant, thin, weed, and harvest farm produce; If they can adapt to legislative demands which can drastically alter their life style (e.g., recent federal and state laws requiring migrant children to attend school regularly); if those change agents (including research scientists) who can influence the agricultural scene will assume more responsibility for the human element; if the complexity of the problem is realized and responsibility assumed in working toward a solution by the various sources of this perpetual problem.

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